

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

One Night

National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
Shenandoah National Park
Emergency: 1-800-732-0911



Nicholson Hollow and Hot-Short Mountain

Standard - Basecamp

Level: Beginner or Strenuous Beginner

Total Length: 10.2 to 12.2 miles

Trip Description: Wilderness area, cascades, park history, and swimming holes; park at Old Rag boundary.

Entry: Nicholson Hollow Boundary

Exit: Nicholson Hollow Boundary

Map(s): PATC #10 Central District

Central District; East side; Route 600 - Nethers

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Day One

Campsite: Nicholson Hollow Trail - backcountry

2 to 3 miles

Hike from parking area to Nicholson Hollow trailhead, up to 0.6 mile.

Hike up Nicholson Hollow Trail 1.4 miles and look for a place to camp in the next mile.

Groups will find enough room to camp legally by looking for sites away from Nicholson Hollow

Trail between the junctions with Corbin Mountain and Hot Mountain-Short Mountain Trails.

You must either find a legal pre-existing site, or pristine camp each night, moving your camp for the second night.

Day Two

Campsite: Nicholson Hollow Trail - backcountry

6.2 to 7.2 miles

Follow Nicholson Hollow Trail to Hot-Short Mountain Trail (0 to 1 mile).

Hike up Hot-Short Mountain Trail 2.1 miles.

Bear left onto Hazel Mountain Trail and hike 0.5 mile.

Turn left onto Catlett Mountain Trail and hike 1.1 miles.

Turn left onto Catlett Spur Trail and hike 200 feet.

Turn left onto Hannah Run Trail and hike 2.5 miles.

Turn left onto Nicholson Hollow Trail and hike to your camp (0 to 1 mile).

Day Three

2 to 3 miles

Return the way you came on the first day, hiking back down Nicholson Hollow Trail 1.4 to 2.4 miles.

Return to Old Rag parking, up to 0.6 mile.

Notes

The Hughes River, which runs through Nicholson Hollow, can run very high in the spring or after heavy rains (knee to waist high). The trail crosses the river, so be prepared. The plus side is the excellent swimming holes that exist even in drought.

While this is a popular, though not crowded, place on the weekends, during the week you can often have this wilderness area to yourself.